

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 101 : The Dragon-Slaying Battle - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 101 : The Dragon-Slaying Battle

Chapter 101: The Dragon-Slaying Battle

Leon watched as Johnny led five subordinates into the mine, following from a distance.

One of the five carried a large shield and stayed by Johnny's side.

The remaining four split into two teams, each pair responsible for operating a ballista.

The men Leon had brought hesitated as they neared the mine and did not dare approach further.

Leon did not force them and let them remain outside.

After all, against a Drake, they would be of little use.

After entering the Labyrinth, Leon noticed that Johnny and his men had not brought any lighting tools.

Just as he was about to ask, one of Johnny's subordinates raised a hand, and a fireball suddenly ignited above his palm.

With a push of his hand, the fireball floated forward like a balloon, steadily illuminating the path ahead.

Seeing this, Leon realized that among Johnny's subordinates there were also those who had received a Blessing—perhaps even all of them.

That was why they dared to challenge a Fourth-Level Magical Beast with only six people.

After the previous purge, the Labyrinth had become exceptionally clean.

The low-level Magical Beasts were either dead or taken out of the Labyrinth, and even the vegetation blocking the path had been nearly cleared away.

During the purge, some Magical Beast corpses had been left in the tunnels, but now they were nowhere to be seen.

Most likely, they had been devoured by the awakened Drake.

Before long, they reached the deepest chamber of the Labyrinth.

The subordinate began summoning more fireballs, sending them drifting in all directions to hover in midair and illuminate the entire space.

From here, they could clearly see the Hall built against the rock wall at the deepest part.

The entrance had been smashed into a massive breach by the Drake, and the interior lay shrouded in darkness.

Johnny's men began setting up the ballistae.

They loaded the Whaling-Harpoon-Type Crossbow Bolts, and two men worked the winch together to draw back the heavy bowstring.

The tail of each bolt was connected to a thick Iron Chain.

At the other end of the chain was a rivet as thick as a spike.

One man lifted a massive wooden hammer and drove the rivet into the solid rock wall.

Then he raised his hand and cast a divine art, causing the surrounding rock to press inward around the chain and rivet, securing them tightly in place.

The subordinate beside Johnny stepped forward and planted the giant shield before him.

Johnny himself calmly removed the crossbow from his back and began loading it.

"If you're going to watch the show, you'd better stand inside the tunnel. It's already awake. The Lord of the Labyrinth can sense any intruder entering its domain," Johnny reminded Leon without turning around.

As if to confirm his words, molten-gold light flared up from deep within the massive breach in the Hall's wall.

Dragon's Might surged from the depths of the Labyrinth like a tidal wave.

Yet what burst out from the darkness was not the Drake, but five gray-blue giant lizards the size of goats.

Horns like the Drake's grew from their heads.

Their scales were as thick and heavy as stone, their backs covered in spines, and they had six legs.

They skimmed low across the ground, charging straight toward Johnny's formation.

“Petrifying Lizards?” Leon was startled.

They were Third-Level Magical Beasts, like Demonic Wolves.

Their strength and speed were not exceptional, but they could exhale toxic gas that caused petrification.

It was said that once fully grown, even their gaze carried a petrifying curse.

A single glance could make one’s body stiffen—the closer the distance and the longer the stare, the stronger the curse.

“The Lord of the Labyrinth can create Magical Beasts. These are familiars created by that Drake!” Johnny calmly raised his loaded crossbow and took aim.

“Don’t look at their eyes!”

As soon as he finished speaking, he pulled the trigger.

The bolt shot out, crackling with lightning.

Empowered by his divine art, the crossbow bolt transformed into a streak of lightning, striking the foremost Petrifying Lizard squarely.

It shattered its stone-like scales and pierced into its body.

The electric shock made the creature convulse violently before it collapsed to the ground.

Johnny reloaded with practiced efficiency and fired again, taking down three more Petrifying Lizards in succession.

However, the last lizard closed the distance during his final reload.

It leaped toward him, spewing toxic gas from its jaws.

At that moment, the shield-bearer beside Johnny rushed forward, smashing the giant shield against the leaping lizard.

A vortex of air gathered on the shield’s surface and burst upon impact with a thunderous sound like a balloon exploding.

The blast of wind pressure hurled the Petrifying Lizard backward and dispersed the toxic gas along with it.

At this range, Johnny no longer needed the crossbow.

He snapped his fingers, and a bolt of lightning sprang from his fingertips, striking the lizard.

It convulsed briefly before going rigid.

Leon silently observed from behind.

Johnny and his subordinate had received the Creator's Blessing.

Among the Four Gods of Origin, the Creator governed the authority of matter and was often depicted in Church art as a craftsman.

He was the benevolent Heavenly Father who created all things, yet also the tyrant who controlled storms, thunder, floods, and earthquakes.

He was the patron deity of sailors, craftsmen, and artisans.

The Creator's Blessing was said to allow one to command natural forces—to summon wind and rain, wield thunder and fire.

Johnny could summon lightning; his subordinate could conjure fireballs.

All of it was power granted by the Creator.

Leon recalled how Aaron Dias had effortlessly slain an assassin—summoning flames, manipulating gravity.

Clearly, Aaron Dias had also received the Creator's Blessing.

Just as the Petrifying Lizards were eliminated, the Drake within the Hall let out a roar filled with Dragon's Might and charged out violently.

"The appetizers are over, boys! The main course is here!" Johnny shouted as he raised his crossbow and fired a Thunderbolt Bolt.

But the Drake had already gauged the intruders' methods through the Petrifying Lizards.

When Johnny raised his crossbow, it was prepared.

As the Thunderbolt Bolt flew, the Drake suddenly lowered its head and spread its umbrella-like, horned crest, blocking with its hardest horns.

With a clang, the lightning bolt struck sparks against its head crest.

The Drake charged forward, extending its neck and unleashing Acid Mist from its jaws.

“Move!” Johnny ordered.

The shield-bearer rushed forward, raising his shield.

The shield looked pitifully small before the Drake—barely half the size of its maw—and seemed about to be swallowed by the surging Acid Mist.

But the instant the shield rose, a gale gathered before it, forming a Wind Wall.

The roaring Acid Mist struck the barrier and was forced back.

“Ready—” Johnny drew his sword and pointed it at the Drake.

“Fire!”

The two ballistae positioned to either side launched simultaneously.

The Whaling-Harpoon-Type Crossbow Bolts slammed heavily into the Drake’s body.

No blood splattered; the bolts lacked the strength to pierce Dragon Scales.

Yet the barbed heads caught firmly between the gaps of its scales, hooking onto its body.

The Drake paid no heed to such trivial attacks.

Its focus remained on the shield-bearer.

Seeing its breath attack fail, it continued charging, intent on crushing him in its jaws.

Johnny drove his sword into the ground and raised both hands.

The subordinates operating the ballistae immediately retreated.

Johnny spread his arms and snapped his fingers.

Two bolts of lightning shot from his fingertips and struck the chains attached to the bolts.

The electricity coursed along the Iron Chains, surging through the embedded bolts and into the gaps of the Drake’s scales.

The Drake, brimming with momentum, suddenly convulsed under the intense electric shock and collapsed to the ground.

The shield-bearer seized the moment to retreat to Johnny’s side.

The Drake struggled to rise, its entire body twitching.

Johnny had already raised his crossbow, loaded and aimed at its eye, and fired a Thunderbolt Bolt.

The Drake, not yet recovered, could not evade in time.

The lightning-infused bolt struck its left eye.

For the first time, the Drake emitted a shrill, agonized howl and thrashed violently.

The chains tightened with its movements, restraining it.

The rivets embedded in the rock wall were pulled halfway out, cracks spreading through the stone.

If not for the earlier reinforcement by divine art, the wall would have shattered completely.

Johnny handed his crossbow to a subordinate to reload and took a deep breath, steadying himself.

Consecutive lightning summons had taken their toll, but now was the critical moment.

He snapped his fingers again.

Another surge of lightning traveled along the chains into the Drake's scales.

The Drake curled inward, convulsing.

Johnny accepted the reloaded crossbow, aimed at its right eye, and fired another Thunderbolt Bolt.

A deafening scream echoed as both of the Drake's eyes were destroyed.

Johnny had blinded it.

But in its final violent struggle, the rivets anchoring the chains were finally torn free from the rock wall, releasing it from its restraints.

Johnny discarded the crossbow, pulled his sword from the ground, and moved lightly toward the Drake's flank, signaling his subordinate.

The shield-bearer understood and quickly moved to another position.

The Drake, just rising from the ground, was still lost in panic from losing its sight.

Hearing footsteps, it turned toward the shield-bearer.

The shield-bearer cast a divine art, summoning a gust that carried his scent toward the Drake while blowing away Johnny's.

By then, Johnny had silently approached from the side and reached the Drake's flank.

Johnny nodded to his subordinate.

Lightning began to coil around his sword until the entire blade glowed with a dazzling blue radiance.

"Come on!" the shield-bearer roared, smashing his shield against the ground with a thunderous crash.

Enraged, the Drake charged toward the sound.

In that split second, Johnny lunged forward, seized one of the horns on its crest, and climbed onto the Drake's head.

It was an immensely dangerous move.

A slight misstep or delay would have meant being caught in its guillotine-like jaws.

But before the Drake could react and shake him off, Johnny drove his lightning-charged sword deep into the already-blinded eye, burying it to the hilt.

The lightning stored within the blade erupted inside the Drake's skull, piercing its brain and traveling along its spinal nerves throughout its body.

The Drake's body went rigid and crashed to the ground.

White smoke rose from its mouth, carrying the stench of scorched flesh.

"It's dead—" Leon inhaled sharply, finally regaining his senses.

Johnny's strength was undeniable, and his subordinates were equally well-trained.

Their coordination was flawless, like a precisely operating machine executing a plan tailored specifically to the Drake.

This was the combat standard of the Church's Fully Appointed Knight Order.

To engage in trades forbidden by the Church and stand against its armed forces, one would need at least this level of strength.

“Stay alert. If there are other Fourth-Level Magical Beasts here, a second Lord of the Labyrinth may emerge,” Johnny ordered.

“A second Lord of the Labyrinth?” Leon asked casually.

“This Drake was undoubtedly the Lord of the Labyrinth. When a Lord dies, if there is another Magical Beast with sufficient mana level, a Lord Succession Phenomenon may occur.” Johnny glanced toward the Hall.

“But judging from the situation, that’s unlikely.”

Leon turned to study the Drake’s corpse carefully.

Its left eye was nearly destroyed, and its right eye remained half-open, the molten glow within gradually dimming.

Without warning, Leon was struck by intense dizziness.

The mana within his body began to churn violently.

Amid a ringing whisper, lightning-like images flooded his mind.

His vision expanded abruptly.

He saw the entire layout of the Labyrinth, and within the deepest Hall, its dilapidated interior—empty except for a massive Moilai Altar.

At its center lay a bottomless vertical shaft, from which invisible mana surged upward.

The images flickered away.

Leon shuddered violently, gasping for breath as cold sweat poured down his body.

A thought branded itself into his mind:

A new—Lord of the Labyrinth!

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 102 : Apostle of Moilai - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 102 : Apostle of Moilai

Chapter 102: Apostle of Moilai

What had that just been?

A new Lord of the Labyrinth? Him?

Leon felt a little confused, yet everything that had flashed through his mind just now clearly conveyed a single concept to him:

At the very instant the Drake died, he had been chosen as the Lord of the Labyrinth.

He focused his mind again, and soon that sensation of his vision expanding reappeared.

He was able to perceive the condition of the surrounding area.

He had clearly never seen the interior of that Hall before, yet he still knew its general layout and could even sense the surging mana beneath the altar.

“Hey, what’s wrong with you?” Johnny noticed Leon zoning out and shouted at him.

“That little bit just now wasn’t enough to scare you into wetting your pants, was it?”

Leon came back to his senses and replied to Johnny without changing his expression, “No. I was just considering how to arrange this place afterward.”

“You’d better start thinking about that quickly. Once I’ve delivered on the Earl’s request, I’ll send someone to collect the remaining payment from you—don’t forget. I suggest you don’t just focus on raising Magical Beasts. In a Labyrinth with mana this abundant, the efficiency of generating Magical Beasts will be very high. It might even suddenly produce something dangerous. You’ll need enough manpower to keep a tight watch on the deepest mana source.” Johnny reminded him.

“Thank you for the reminder.” Leon said this, yet his attention remained fixed on the churning mana within the vertical shaft at the center of the altar that he sensed in his mind.

He faintly felt as though he could control that mana.

In the depths of a Labyrinth, there were usually fissures and deep chasms that led straight down into the earth.

Moilai’s mana continuously overflowed from them, turning the underground space into a Labyrinth.

This mana accelerated the growth and reproduction of native organisms within the Labyrinth while causing them to mutate into Magical Beasts.

These Magical Beasts could also reproduce like ordinary creatures.

In some larger Labyrinths with vast reserves of mana, the mana could even gather deep within and directly create Magical Beasts from nothing.

Just as Johnny had mentioned earlier, the Lord of the Labyrinth could control this power and create new Magical Beasts.

For example, the awakened Drake had created those Petrifying Lizards to serve as its familiars and guard the temple with it.

If he had truly become the Lord of the Labyrinth, did that mean he could directly control this mana—freely create Magical Beasts, or perhaps calm it down so that the Labyrinth would only supply mana without generating Magical Beasts on its own?

After waiting for a long time and seeing no further movement in the Labyrinth, Johnny ordered his subordinates, “Go check the situation inside the temple.”

“Mr. Johnny, I have something I’d like to ask you.” Leon spoke up from behind.

“Spit it out!” Though somewhat impatient, Johnny was still willing to listen.

“Has there ever been a precedent of a Witch becoming the Lord of a Labyrinth?” Leon asked tentatively.

As a former Knight Order Commander, Johnny could be considered part of the Church’s upper ranks.

He was also highly experienced in dealing with Magical Beasts and had fought heretics before.

Leon believed he knew quite a bit about Labyrinths and Witches.

“You’re talking about an Apostle of Moilai?” Johnny asked in return.

“Apostle of Moilai?” It was Leon’s first time hearing this term.

“It corresponds to the Saints among those blessed by the Four Gods of Origin. In this world, there are always a few exceptionally gifted individuals. Among Witches, the Apostles of Moilai are the chosen ones. Legend says they can directly establish a connection with the mana flowing from beneath the earth from Moilai, becoming Lords of the Labyrinth like high-level Magical Beasts. In heretical nations that worship Moilai, once such a Witch appears, she is immediately appointed as a high-ranking and powerful High Priestess.” Johnny explained lazily.

“So there really have been Witches who became Lords of the Labyrinth before?” Leon pressed.

“Well, most records about Apostles of Moilai are just legends. Only one has been confirmed by the Church as unquestionably real.” Johnny said.

“Who?”

“The Princess of the Islander Nation three hundred years ago, Isis. She was an Apostle of Moilai. Historical records clearly state that within temples dedicated to Moilai—meaning inside Labyrinths—she continuously created Magical Beasts to defend the city against the Empire’s army. She was extremely troublesome. And because of that, when the Islander Nation fell, she still had many followers. She crossed the sea with them and established Moirland.” Johnny explained.

“The Princess of the Islander Nation?” Leon fell into thought.

In that case, was he like that Princess of the Islander Nation—an Apostle of Moilai, possessing this once-in-a-century talent to become a Lord of the Labyrinth?

Considering that he, despite being male, had still received Moilai’s Blessing, the possibility was not low.

However, he would have to verify it later to be completely certain.

That Princess of the Islander Nation had lived three hundred years ago.

Logically, she should be dead by now.

But not necessarily.

It was said that Witches possessed enduring youth and long lifespans.

There were even legends of immortality.

“You’d better not expect your own Witch to have that kind of talent.” Johnny misinterpreted Leon’s intention in asking about this information.

At that moment, his subordinates finished exploring the Hall and came out, raising their hands to wave at Johnny.

“Looks like there’s nothing valuable inside the Hall. Want to take a look?” Johnny asked Leon without surprise upon seeing the gesture.

The ruins were most likely a Temple of Moilai built by the Islanders, who worshiped the Earth Mother Goddess, following the structure of a natural Labyrinth.

The so-called Earth Mother Goddess Priestesses of the Islanders were actually Witches.

They had the ability to control the Labyrinth, tame the Magical Beasts inside it, and even build temples within it.

When the Empire destroyed the Islander Nation three hundred years ago, the Islanders on Arend Island had likely found a way to destroy the passages within the Labyrinth, putting it into dormancy and hiding the temple in the mountains.

It remained concealed until Viscount Arend purchased the land for development and dug mining tunnels in the mountain—accidentally excavating into the ruins and bringing the Labyrinth back into the light.

If that were the case, even if there had once been anything valuable inside the temple, it would have long since been moved away.

Leon and Johnny stepped into the Hall together.

Johnny's subordinates had already lit torches inside.

The Hall was truly empty—nothing but rows of pillars and, at its center, a Moilai Altar as large as a plaza.

At the very center of the Moilai Altar was a hollow vertical shaft, only about thirty centimeters in diameter—no one needed to worry about falling in.

A faint column of light shone upward from the shaft, piercing toward the dome above.

It seemed to be an effect produced by highly concentrated mana.

Everything matched exactly what Leon had sensed earlier.

Now that he was closer to the altar, he felt the surging mana beneath the shaft even more clearly.

“A large altar of the Earth Mother Goddess. That's quite rare.” Johnny suddenly grinned.

“There must have once been some rather exciting rituals held here.”

Leon looked at Johnny in confusion.

“You didn't know? The Islanders worshiped the Earth Mother Goddess—Moilai—believing she governed reproduction. It's said that in the past, the Earth Mother Goddess Priestesses of the Islanders—that is, the Witches—would select tribal heroes

to enter the temple and revel with them through the night as a form of worship to the Mother Goddess.” Johnny spoke of the topic with evident relish.

“Is that true?” Leon asked casually.

“It’s something from a long time ago. It no longer exists now. But when the Church associates Witches with promiscuity in its propaganda, it’s not entirely slander.” Johnny swept his gaze around and ended the topic.

“Anyway, it seems there’s nothing worthwhile here. That’s that.”

Leon also glanced around, but his gaze was suddenly drawn to a recess in the wall deep within the Hall.

There were several such recessed designs along the wall, seemingly decorative.

However, Leon faintly sensed that there was something behind that particular recess.

He focused his mind and tried to retrieve the structure of the Labyrinth again.

The three-dimensional layout of the Hall slowly emerged in his mind once more.

Then he saw it—just as he had suspected.

Behind that recess was a narrow passage, and within it, a hidden chamber.

However, he could not clearly sense what was inside the hidden chamber.

He could only feel that a dense concentration of mana was gathered there.

Leon glanced at Johnny and the others behind him, who were already preparing to deal with the Drake’s corpse.

In the end, he said nothing and left the Hall with them.

Two days later, Leon and Rena stood inside the Hall deep within the Labyrinth.

After the Drake died, Johnny and the others had cut up the corpse and taken it away, leaving Leon only the parts that could be refined for mana extraction.

Leon hired additional manpower to thoroughly clear out the depths of the Labyrinth and brought in a large amount of equipment.

He personally processed the Drake’s brain and heart into reagents suitable for mana extraction before finally bringing Rena to the depths of the Arend Island Labyrinth to inspect the situation.

“You’re saying you can control this Labyrinth?” Rena asked Leon in astonishment.

Leon nodded.

He had told only Rena about this matter.

Only Rena knew that he had received a Witch’s Blessing.

He trusted her completely.

To discuss and verify this matter, she was undoubtedly the best person to seek help from.

“Yes. I intend to verify it, so I dismissed everyone else today. It’s just the two of us here.” Leon said.

“But how are you going to verify it?” Rena asked.

“I’m going to try creating a Magical Beast here.” Leon’s gaze shifted to the altar.

Beside the vertical shaft at the altar’s center stood an empty iron-barred beast cage.

“Is something like that really possible?” Rena looked surprised.

“We’ll find out if we try.”

“It feels a bit dangerous. What if you create a Magical Beast and it loses control—” Rena sounded worried.

“That’s why I need you watching from the side.” Leon pointed to the side.

Not far away, three Demonic Wolves—including the Pack Alpha—sat there on standby like well-trained hounds.

After repeated training by Leon and Rena, these Demonic Wolves had become quite docile.

Not only Rena, but Leon as well could now control them.

However, Leon’s precision and upper limit in number were still inferior to Rena when she used the Blood Pact ability.

He could only command the Demonic Wolves like hunting dogs, whereas Rena could control Magical Beasts almost as if they were extensions of her own will.

“All right... but be careful.” Rena still looked somewhat tense.

“I’m starting.” Leon said, then focused his will and began drawing upon the mana within the vertical shaft.

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 103 : The Power of the Lord of the Labyrinth - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 103 : The Power of the Lord of the Labyrinth

Chapter 103: The Power of the Lord of the Labyrinth

As Leon poured his consciousness into it, the beam of light shining out from the shaft truly seemed to separate into a wisp of faintly glowing mist.

Following Leon’s thoughts, it drifted toward the beast cage and gradually gathered into a clump inside.

“Let’s start with something simple.” Leon thought this, and the first thing that came to mind was the most classic Level One monster — the Slime.

In that instant, the Slime’s general physiological structure naturally surfaced in his mind, like a three-dimensional diagram being constructed within his thoughts.

Very quickly, that cluster of magic power turned pale blue.

Over the course of about ten minutes, the magic power gradually manifested a form — a translucent pale-blue sphere, with an egg-sized core floating inside.

After the Slime’s form gradually stabilized, it began to wriggle across the ground.

“It really worked!” Rena’s eyes widened in astonishment.

Leon’s conjecture had been confirmed.

After becoming the Lord of the Labyrinth, he truly possessed the ability to create monsters.

“It worked, but—” Leon frowned slightly as he carefully observed the Slime wriggling inside the cage.

“Why is it so small?”

This Slime was only about the size of a papaya, roughly the same as a newly split Slime.

A mature Slime could grow larger than a watermelon.

Leon tried to control the Slime to crawl out of the beast cage, then had Rena try controlling it as well.

Controlling such a low-level monster posed no difficulty for either of them.

Leon decided to try another creature.

He gathered magic power again and attempted to create another monster he was familiar with — the Head-Hunting Rabbit.

Likewise, its physiological structure surfaced in his mind.

This time, the separated magic power turned into red mist.

After gathering together, it took about fifteen minutes to slowly form the shape of a rabbit.

“This—” Seeing the Head-Hunting Rabbit he had created, Leon frowned again.

The rabbit he had created was clearly a young rabbit that had just been weaned and grown fur, small enough to be easily held in someone’s palm.

“It seems the monsters you create all start at the juvenile stage,” Rena said.

“This is a bit different from what I imagined.” Leon shook his head.

The Drake had produced five fully grown Petrified Lizards in just one or two days, yet when he created a Level One monster, he could only produce a juvenile.

This was quite different from the image he had of creating an army of monsters within the labyrinth.

Was it because his magic power level was insufficient, or was there an inherent difference between a human serving as the Lord of the Labyrinth and a monster serving as one?

Originally, he had worried that the monsters he created might lose control, which was why he had Rena keep the Demonic Wolves on standby nearby.

Yet the monsters he created were all juveniles, posing virtually no threat.

“Let’s try something else.”

Leon drew upon magic power again.

This time, he wanted to attempt creating the Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats that had been discovered in this labyrinth.

However, this time, the physiological structure of the Bloodsucking Mosquito Bat did not appear in his mind.

Although the magic power within the beam of light responded to his command, it merely drifted around where his consciousness focused, showing no intention of condensing.

Leon was surprised by this failure.

The Bloodsucking Mosquito Bat was not a particularly high-level monster, and it was even smaller than the Head-Hunting Rabbit.

The Head-Hunting Rabbit could at least be considered a Level Two monster.

After thinking for a moment, he glanced at the three Demonic Wolves standing by not far away.

Slowly gathering magic power, he prepared to create a Demonic Wolf.

Yet once again, the magic power merely wandered back and forth at that spot, without condensing into a monster.

Leon and Rena looked at each other, both at a loss for a moment, then began to think about the reason.

The Slime and the Head-Hunting Rabbit were monsters they had raised before, while the Demonic Wolves and Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats were monsters of the Arundel Island Labyrinth.

If there was any difference between the two—

“Could it be related to whether you’ve extracted magical essence from them?” Rena suddenly thought of a possibility.

After obtaining the Witch’s power, Leon had once experimented by refining magical essence from the Slimes and Head-Hunting Rabbits they had raised.

But after discovering that the purity of the magical essence he refined was inferior to Rena’s, he had largely stopped trying.

Leon considered it and felt it made some sense.

It seemed that the types of monsters he could create needed to have formed some direct connection with him.

Perhaps this connection had been established during the process of extracting magical essence from them, which was why, when creating Slimes and Head-Hunting Rabbits, their physiological structures had surfaced in his mind.

Verifying it was simple — as long as Leon refined magical essence once from materials of other monsters, then attempted to create them again.

The Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats and Giant Rats they had captured from this labyrinth last time had been slaughtered due to their low breeding value.

Some had been left in the labyrinth to be eaten by the Drake, while the portion taken outside had been processed quickly by Rena to prevent decay.

The magical essence refined from them had only reached around seventy-two percent purity.

As for the Demonic Wolves, they had not slaughtered any yet.

The only ready-made magical essence reagents available here were those extracted from the Drake and the Petrified Lizards.

After some thought, Leon decided to play it safe and try with the Petrified Lizards first.

It would also allow them to test whether the Moilai Altar in this temple was useful.

Leon explained his idea to Rena, and the two quickly arranged the Petrified Lizard magical essence reagent on the altar.

The altar in this temple was enormous, like a plaza.

The runes and magic arrays carved upon it were far more complex, yet at certain key points there were raised platforms inscribed with magic arrays and runes of precisely fitting dimensions, clearly meant for witches to refine magical essence.

They carried the distillation apparatus up, and Leon began refining magical essence.

Very soon, he extracted a test tube of magical essence that shimmered with a gray sheen.

“This altar refines magical essence so quickly,” Rena commented.

Refining magical essence on this altar took only one-third of the time they had needed at the smaller altar.

Whether it was due to differences in craftsmanship or because it was within an active labyrinth, he did not know.

Leon tried further purifying it twice.

The transparency of the magical essence from the second and third refinements did not change noticeably.

It seemed that on this altar, even the additional purification step could be simplified.

Rena compared the reagent's color, then concluded, "The purity is seventy-five percent."

"If I can refine it to seventy-five percent, then you should be able to get close to eighty percent," Leon said.

"That would require testing," Rena replied.

"These Petrified Lizards haven't even eaten humans, yet they already yield this level of purity. That proves the claim is true — the higher a monster's level, the purer the magical essence extracted from it. In that case, we should be able to extract unprecedentedly high-purity magical essence from the Drake," Leon speculated.

After refining magical essence from the Petrified Lizards, Leon once again attempted to create a monster.

This time, as he drew upon magic power, the physiological structure of the Petrified Lizard successfully appeared in his mind.

The mist of magic power turned gray-blue, then began to condense.

But in the end, the magic power did not take the shape of a lizard.

Instead, it gradually condensed into an oval form, finally becoming a gray-blue egg about the size of a volleyball.

Leon and Rena both stared blankly for a moment.

This was — a Petrified Lizard egg?

"Don't tell me we have to wait for it to hatch on its own?" Leon gave a wry smile.

“It’s not entirely without advantages. If we raise it from the juvenile stage, the monster should be easier to control,” Rena said.

“Petrified Lizards are venomous and not easy to raise. If we’re going to raise a Level Three monster, Demonic Wolves would be more suitable,” Leon said after thinking it over.

After creating this Level Three monster, Leon felt obvious fatigue.

Although creating monsters utilized the labyrinth’s magic power, guiding that magic power still required him to circulate his own magic to trigger resonance.

He could not create monsters without limit.

Moreover, the monsters he created were all in the juvenile stage or still in the incubation phase.

They would need to be raised to maturity before they had practical value.

Viewed this way, his ability to create monsters as the Lord of the Labyrinth was actually rather limited.

If there were already existing monster species, allowing them to reproduce on their own might even be more efficient.

The advantage of this ability lay in creating monsters they did not currently possess — especially those that were individually highly valuable.

For example, that Drake.

If he refined magical essence from the Drake and could create an Drake egg, and the hatched Drake would obey his command, then this labyrinth would effectively gain another powerful guardian!

However, this could only remain speculation for now.

Creating an Drake undoubtedly carried risks and could only be attempted under sufficient safeguards.

Whether his magic power level could even accomplish it was unknown.

At the very least, in his current state today, he could not continue.

“Let’s stop the experiment here for now,” Leon said, turning his gaze toward the indentation on the wall at the deepest part of the labyrinth. Next, let’s see what’s inside that secret chamber.”

“There really is a room behind there?” Rena carefully examined it alongside Leon but still could not discern anything unusual.

“Since it’s been confirmed that I am the Lord of the Labyrinth, then the secret chamber most likely exists.” Leon approached the indentation and began feeling around, preparing to find the mechanism to open it.

However, the moment he touched the indentation, a rumbling sound of mechanisms activating suddenly echoed from the wall.

Then a hidden door in the wall opened automatically, revealing a narrow passage before him.

“It opened?” Rena said, dumbfounded.

“Why did it open on its own?” Leon was equally astonished.

He felt that he had not even touched any mechanism — he had merely touched the wall.

Was it because he possessed the Witch’s blessing? Or because he was the Lord of the Labyrinth?

He concentrated his mind to probe the pitch-black room at the other end of the passage.

He still could not sense what was inside, only the thick flow of magic power circulating within.

But regardless, if the room inside had been prepared for the Lord of the Labyrinth or for the Witch serving as the Earth Mother Goddess’s priestess, then the likelihood of danger was greatly reduced.

“Leon, there’s writing here.” Rena suddenly pointed near the entrance of the passage.

There was a line of characters on the wall that Leon did not recognize, somewhat similar to the runes on the Moilai Altar.

“The secret chamber inside is called the Chamber of Ritual.”

“You can read that script?” Leon was somewhat surprised.

“It’s an ancient script used by followers of Moilai. My grandmother taught me some of it,” Rena said.

“With a hidden room like this, perhaps there’s something valuable inside.” Leon said this, though he had not fully let down his guard.

“Let the Demonic Wolves go in first to scout the way.”

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 104 : A Room One Cannot Leave Without Doing xx - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 104 : A Room One Cannot Leave Without Doing xx

Chapter 104: A Room One Cannot Leave Without Doing xx

Following his instructions, Rena controlled the Demon Wolf and sent it into the pitch-black chamber.

It made a full circuit inside, sniffing everywhere, even scratching and pawing at the walls of the hidden room.

In the end, no mechanisms were triggered.

"I'll go in and take a look. Stay outside and keep watch first." After giving Rena his instructions, Leon picked up the lantern and walked inside.

The secret chamber was not large.

Once inside, the lantern was enough to illuminate most of it.

On the innermost wall stood a statue fixed in place—a goddess draped in thorns.

A thorn pierced through her chest, and the veil carved over her head obscured her face, making her features indistinct.

Behind the statue was engraved a massive pentagram emblem.

Although some details differed from the statues of Moilai that Leon knew, many elements were clearly similar.

If this temple had truly been built by the ancient Ailanders, then the Earth Mother they worshiped was very likely Moilai herself.

Aside from the statue, the only other object in the room was a square stone platform in the center.

Its surface was carved with some text.

Leon glanced at it a few times but could not understand it at all.

However, he could tell it was written in the same script that Rena had just deciphered at the entrance—"Chamber of Ritual."

Leon circled the stone platform once.

He found no openings or mechanisms.

It resembled a table, yet also a stone bed.

Other than the inscriptions on its surface, there was nothing.

Was there really a need to hide a room like this so thoroughly?

"Leon, how is it?" Rena called out to him.

After looking around and sensing no obvious danger, Leon shouted back, "Why don't you come in after all? There's some writing here—I can't read it."

Upon hearing this, Rena cautiously stepped into the chamber and came to Leon's side, carefully examining the text on the stone platform.

"Can you read it?" Leon asked.

"Offer to the Mother Goddess—the Rite of Procreation?" Rena narrowed her eyes as she slowly identified the words carved on the stone platform.

"This—what does it mean?"

"Procreation? Rite?" Upon hearing her interpretation, Leon vaguely realized something.

He quickly recalled what Johnny had once told him about the ancient Ailander traditions: the witch who served as the Earth Mother would unite with a chosen tribal hero in the temple as a sacrifice to the Earth Mother.

Could it be that the so-called ritual was not performed at the altar, but specifically inside this secret chamber?

Thinking of this, Leon could not help but let out an awkward laugh.

How was he supposed to explain this to Rena?

"Is this an ancient statue of Moilai? So what exactly is this room used for?" Rena asked, studying the statue in confusion.

"Forget it, Rena. Let's head out first—" Leon began to suggest.

Before he could finish, a rumbling sound suddenly echoed.

Leon and Rena both turned toward the entrance.

The door that had opened automatically earlier shut without warning.

"Ah!" Rena cried out.

Leon sucked in a sharp breath and, without hesitation, grabbed Rena's hand and ran toward the exit.

However, the narrow passage between the room and the door slowed them down.

The stone door closed with extraordinary speed—they did not even have time to touch it before it slammed shut with a heavy clack.

"Why did it suddenly close?" Rena panicked at once.

"Are we trapped inside?"

"Don't panic." Leon said this while feeling around near the stone door and passageway, but he could not find anything resembling a mechanism.

When they entered, the door had opened inexplicably.

Now it had closed just as inexplicably, trapping them inside.

Finding nothing near the door, Leon and Rena retreated into the room.

Rena was already at a loss.

"Leon, this—what do we do? We didn't trigger some kind of trap, did we?"

"If this were a trap, it should've been something more lethal. Let's look for clues. Since this chamber was built, there should be a way to open it—" Leon began scanning the room for hints.

When his gaze returned to the stone platform, he suddenly froze.

The line of text on the platform began to gather magic power, emitting a faint glow that stood out especially in the dim chamber.

Leon fell silent.

A secret chamber.

A condition for opening it.

Offering the Rite of Procreation to the Mother Goddess.

The ancient Ailander tradition—

Did that mean they had to complete the ritual before they could leave this room?

He had a vague feeling he had heard of something like this in certain works from his previous life.

""

Could something like this actually exist!?

"Rena—" Leon called hesitantly, already thinking about how to explain this to her.

At that moment, Leon sensed the dense magic filling the room begin to move in an unusual pattern.

Although the lantern's flame was still burning, he suddenly felt darkness descend before his eyes.

"Ah!" Rena let out a cry—she could no longer see either.

"Rena, over here!" Leon hurriedly reached out in the direction where she had just been standing, trying to grab her hand first.

In the darkness, Rena responded in the same way.

Leon felt her grasp both his hands with hers.

Fortunately, the darkness lasted only a few seconds before abruptly dissipating.

The lantern's light once again illuminated the entire space.

Then Leon froze in place.

In front of him stood two Renas side by side.

Each extended one hand, holding his left and right hands respectively.

The two Renas looked at each other and simultaneously drew in sharp breaths, as though staring into a mirror.

"This—" Leon stared at the doubled Rena in shock and instinctively let go of both their hands.

"It's a Doppelganger!" the Rena on the left suddenly shouted, pushing Leon away while distancing herself from the other version of herself.

"Leon, be careful! It's a Doppelganger!"

"No, you're the Doppelganger!" the Rena on the right retreated as well, pointing at the left one and shouting to Leon, "Leon, don't trust her!"

"A Doppelganger—so it really exists?"

Leon recalled the rumors about Doppelgangers that circulated in the labyrinth.

Legend said that within the labyrinth there existed a type of monster without a fixed form.

It could transform into the appearance of any creature and even read the shallow surface thoughts of humans, taking the form of someone close to its target in order to approach them.

Once the target let down their guard, it would kill them.

It was as if it were a dangerous monster designed specifically to prey on humans.

However, there had never been definitive proof of its existence.

It was said that once killed, a Doppelganger's form would collapse and dissipate, leaving only the accounts of labyrinth explorers as testimony.

Now it seemed the creature truly existed.

Not only could it take on another's appearance, it could even perfectly imitate their voice and speech.

The earlier fluctuation of magic power had felt very similar to when he used the power of the Lord of the Labyrinth to create monsters.

Could it be that some mechanism within this secret chamber had used the gathered magic here to generate this Doppelganger on the spot?

But for what purpose?

After a brief moment of thought, Leon decided on the fastest way to distinguish the real from the fake.

He took out a test tube containing a sample of his own blood and activated his ability.

The blood immediately turned a dangerous purplish-red.

Both Renas revealed nervous expressions at the same time.

He first extended the test tube toward the Rena on the left.

The intimidation of the Cursed Blood made her entire body stiffen, but she quickly controlled her expression and did not react too strongly.

Leon's sharp gaze shifted to the Rena on the right as he extended the test tube toward her instead.

The expression on the right Rena's face instantly shifted from tension to terror.

Under the instinctive fear that seized it at a fundamental level, its form visibly distorted.

"Fake!" Leon immediately drew his gun.

"Screeeaaahhh!!" The Doppelganger emitted a piercing shriek.

The features on its body suddenly faded, and it transformed into a black humanoid mass, like a three-dimensional shadow, before darting swiftly toward the wall.

At that moment, Rena controlled the Demon Wolf to pounce and pin the humanoid Doppelganger to the ground.

The Doppelganger did not struggle—it was restrained by Rena's will.

When she first realized she had been copied, Rena had tried to control the Doppelganger, but it had resisted her.

Like the Demon Wolf, it had not been easily subdued.

However, the instant Leon exposed its flaw with the Cursed Blood, Rena felt her magic power resonate successfully with it.

Even so, she was still uneasy and chose to have the Demon Wolf pin it down first.

"What exactly is going on with this room?" Rena pressed a hand to her chest, still shaken.

"First it traps people inside, and then a Doppelganger appears out of nowhere?"

The Doppelganger had appeared out of thin air.

It was clearly generated automatically by the labyrinth, seemingly based on some mechanism of this secret chamber.

Leon silently observed the Doppelganger for a long time before finally speaking.

"I think I know what's happening. This Doppelganger was probably meant to cooperate with the ritual."

If the ritual required to open the chamber was truly what Leon suspected, then if a single person entered and was trapped inside, how would they complete it?

The answer was this Doppelganger generated by the labyrinth.

It would automatically read the surface thoughts of the intruder and transform into the appearance of the person they secretly admired, then complete the ritual with them.

"What ritual?" Rena asked in confusion.

"That is—" Leon pondered for a long moment before finally sighing and revealing his speculation in full.

However, before he could finish, Rena had already frozen completely in place.

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 105 : I Had Abundant Theoretical Knowledge - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 105 : I Had Abundant Theoretical Knowledge

Chapter 105: I Had Abundant Theoretical Knowledge

"Rena?" When Leon was about to finish speaking, he noticed Rena reacting as if she had been petrified in place.

He waved a hand in front of her.

"Miss Rena?"

Rena finally came back to her senses.

She blinked twice, lifted a hand to smooth her hair, and forced herself to appear calm as she said, "This isn't the time for jokes. Hurry and find a way out!"

“I wasn’t joking.” Leon spread his hands and said very seriously, “Otherwise how do you explain this passage? And what role that Doppelganger played here?”

“I’ve never heard of this kind of sacrificial method since becoming a witch!” Rena shook her head vigorously.

“Do you think your grandmother would have told you about things like this even if she knew?” Leon asked in return.

Rena was momentarily speechless.

Indeed, when her grandmother had taught her how to become a witch, even if she had known such useless knowledge, she would never have told her.

“Actually, Church art and folk legends both mention things like this. The prototype should be the traditions of the Ancient Ailanders, though there were definitely elements of exaggeration and slander,” Leon said.

In stories created by the Church and in folk accounts passed down among the people, witches were always linked with all kinds of lewd acts.

In the stories, witches took pleasure in tempting people into depravity.

No matter how noble a knight was, once he succumbed to lust before a witch, he would fall into becoming a lackey of heresy.

In folk legends, witches would also lure people to heretical territories, hold grand revelries, and thereby recruit followers of Moilai.

Even Johnny Wellman, who had once been a Church knight, believed that the Earth Mother Goddess Priestesses of Ancient Ailand would hold wild celebrations with tribal heroes at outdoor altars.

But judging from Leon’s investigation, the place where such rituals were truly carried out should have been this cramped Chamber of Ritual.

From its layout, it could hold at most two people.

Large-scale orgies were unrealistic; it was even possible that only the priestess and her chosen partner were allowed to conduct that kind of dual-cultivation ritual here.

But if that Doppelganger was meant to be used for a ritual performed by a single person, then the idea of dual cultivation with a magical beast still seemed a bit too ahead of its time.

“B-but—this—this—” Rena’s face flushed red, her gaze darting everywhere as she fell completely into confusion.

“Calm down, Rena. We have to think of a way out!” Leon pressed a hand on Rena’s shoulder and said with burning intensity in his eyes.

“Y-you mean, the way out you’re talking about wouldn’t be—” Rena’s voice grew so tense it went off pitch.

“We have to find a way to escape, right? Since there’s a method right in front of us, we should—at least—try it?” Leon chose his words carefully.

Rena stared at Leon.

As she looked at him, a trace of suspicion suddenly appeared on her face.

“Are you really just thinking about escaping?”

“Of course! This is a matter of life and death. I think this isn’t the time to worry about minor details!” Leon said righteously.

But the suspicion on Rena’s face did not fade.

Instead, it grew heavier.

After a long while, she threw him a soul-searching question.

“Then why are you smiling?”

Leon’s heart jolted.

He hurriedly adjusted his expression.

“A- am I?”

“You couldn’t even hold back the corners of your mouth!” Having confirmed that Leon harbored selfish motives in this matter, Rena pushed him with some embarrassment and irritation.

“All right, I admit it, I admit it!” Leon raised his hands helplessly.

“I did feel just a tiny bit of anticipation, but that was also so we could escape! Otherwise, do you really want me to do it with that Doppelganger—”

Hearing this, Rena and Leon both glanced at the Doppelganger pinned down by the demonic wolf.

After being restrained by Rena, the Doppelganger was extremely obedient, not moving at all.

“—” The two fell into silence.

Both of them felt some resistance toward this plan.

Naturally, Rena did not want Leon to take such a risk.

The idea that the Doppelganger was meant to assist in a ritual performed by a single person was merely Leon’s speculation.

Doppelgangers were magical beasts that approached humans in the guise of loved ones and then killed them.

Who knew whether it would suddenly do something dangerous during the ritual? Even if it cooperated, it was hard to say whether close contact between a human and a magical beast would cause illness, curses, or other adverse effects.

Even setting that aside, most people could not accept watching their lover copulate with someone else, let alone a magical beast.

“Maybe... maybe there’s another way?” Rena said as she thought.

“This Doppelganger was automatically generated by this room. Maybe it knows other exits or rules?”

She stared at the Doppelganger, focused her will, and issued an order to it.

“Take us out!”

The Doppelganger showed slight movement, as if taking time to comprehend her command.

Then it began rapidly changing its form, gradually turning into Leon’s appearance.

“—I think you really want to die!!” After a moment of silence, Leon suddenly flew into a rage, drawing his gun and aiming it at the Doppelganger’s head.

After understanding Rena’s command, the answer the Doppelganger gave was still the same as Leon’s deduction.

Only this time, after failing to transform into Rena before, it chose to read Rena’s memories and transform itself into Leon.

Although this was merely a programmed response to the command, in Leon's eyes, this Doppelganger was truly courting death!

Sensing Leon's fury, the Doppelganger instantly reverted to a black, humanoid shadow-like form, letting out shrill hissing cries as if begging for mercy.

Rena awkwardly glanced at Leon.

The Doppelganger's reaction further confirmed Leon's deduction—if they wanted to leave this place, the only reliable method was to complete the ritual.

Leon noticed Rena's gaze and turned his head.

After remaining silent for a moment, he sighed, put away his gun, and looked into Rena's eyes as he said, "Rena, I understand that being forced by circumstances like this can make you feel a bit repulsed—"

"I-I'm not repulsed." Rena instinctively denied it upon hearing this, her voice growing softer and softer.

"I'm just—afraid. This kind of thing, it's my—first time!"

"Don't worry, leave it to me. I have abundant—" Leon adopted a reassuring tone.

"You have experience?" Rena widened her eyes and looked at Leon.

Of course she couldn't not care about something like this.

If Leon said he was battle-hardened from countless past experiences, that sense of estrangement would only grow.

"—theoretical knowledge." Leon spread his hands and continued.

Rena stared blankly at Leon, not reacting for a moment.

Feeling embarrassed under her gaze, Leon could only smile awkwardly.

"You're nervous. Actually, I'm nervous too."

Based on the knowledge accumulated in his previous life, he dared say he had already mastered dragon-slaying techniques—he just had never found a dragon.

Only then did Rena react.

In the dim lighting, Leon's face was actually just as flushed as hers.

Realizing that the other person's feelings were much the same as her own, most of the tension in Rena's heart dissipated.

The two looked at each other and smiled awkwardly.

Then Leon grew serious, looked at Rena, and said, "Rena, I—"

He felt he should say something—vows of eternal love, sweet words.

Many candidate phrases flashed through his mind, yet all of them felt somewhat strange.

Saying them under such special circumstances seemed like nothing more than laying the groundwork to take advantage of the situation.

Rena seemed to sense this.

She hesitated, then finally mustered her courage and gently raised her hands to cup Leon's face.

Leon looked at Rena in surprise.

She was clearly even more nervous than he was.

Her gaze flickered constantly, like a skittish kitten, yet she still stared straight at him.

From this angle, the firelight reflected in Rena's pupils, making her eyes brighter than ever before.

Leon saw resolve in Rena's eyes.

Just like the moment when Rena had gathered her courage to tell him she wanted to leave together, he suddenly realized he didn't need to think so much.

A single look was already enough for them.

Without a word, he wrapped an arm around Rena's shoulders and slowly leaned his face closer.

Rena tensed up all over in nervousness, but in the end, she obediently closed her eyes.

However, just as the atmosphere was reaching its peak, the two suddenly heard a strange sound coming from the direction of the door.

Leon and Rena's expressions both changed as they instinctively looked toward the stone door.

The door had not opened, but the noise had indeed come from there.

Besides the noise from the door, there were also rustling sounds within the room.

The two followed the sound again and were both stunned.

They saw that the demonic wolf was no longer pressing down on the Doppelganger.

At some point, the Doppelganger had transformed into a demonic wolf of the opposite sex and was rubbing ears and cheeks with the demonic wolf.

Seeing that the two demonic wolves were about to begin mounting, Leon suddenly understood.

This Doppelganger was still trying to carry out Rena's command to get them out.

After the previous options were rejected, it had moved on to option three—completing the ritual with that demonic wolf!

Judging from the sound from the door earlier, this method actually seemed to work.

Once they finished mating, the door would open on its own, and then they could leave safely!

Almost without thinking, Leon grabbed the test tube containing his Blood Sample again, opened it, and was about to splash it toward the two magical beasts.

How could this be allowed? After all the effort to build up the atmosphere, how could he let them ruin his big moment?

But then he caught sight of Rena staring at him fixedly, and he hesitated.

If earlier there had still been half-willing hope, the situation was now completely different.

They no longer had to complete the ritual.

If Rena did not agree, forcing it would be meaningless.

Thinking of this, Leon stopped his hand and let out a soft sigh.

Seeing him stop, Rena hesitated as if wanting to speak, then finally muttered softly, "Y-you're not going to do it?"

Leon looked at Rena in surprise, then understood.

He immediately splashed his blood toward the two magical beasts.

The demonic wolf and the Doppelganger were still entangled, unable to react in time.

Splashed by the blood, they let out startled cries.

Leon seized the chance to activate his ability, turning the blood splashed on them into Cursed Blood, with thick clouds of Purple Smoke billowing out.

Accompanied by a series of shrill screams, the two magical beasts separated and rolled on the ground in agony.

The Doppelganger reverted back to its shadow form.

Before long, both the demonic wolf and the Doppelganger lay rigid and motionless.

The room returned to silence.

Leon turned to look at Rena.

She met his gaze, then looked away, then cautiously looked back again.

Leon could no longer restrain himself.

He leaned in close and kissed Rena.

Rena wrapped her arms around his neck and responded with an embrace.

After some time, the stone door emitted a rumbling roar as the Hidden Chamber opened once more.

However, the sounds inside the room continued for quite a while, and no one came out for a long time.

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 106 : The Werewolf and the Succubus - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 106 : The Werewolf and the Succubus

Chapter 106: The Werewolf and the Succubus

An hour later, Leon and Rena finally walked out from the opened Hidden Chamber.

The Demonic Wolf and the Doppelganger were in a state of cursed petrification; they would not die anytime soon, so Leon left them alone for the moment.

As they passed through the passage, Rena staggered slightly.

Leon reached out to support her.

“Are you alright?”

“I’m fine. My legs are just a bit sore.” When Rena said this, her eyes fixed directly on Leon, tinged with faint resentment.

“What’s wrong? Still hurts?” Leon asked cautiously.

“It’s fine. It’s not as painful as I imagined——” Rena muttered softly.

“But don’t you think it lasted too long? The door had already opened during the first round——”

“Sorry.” Leon smiled apologetically.

“But you didn’t tell me to stop either.”

“Pervert.” Rena muttered under her breath and lifted her foot to lightly kick Leon’s calf.

After thinking for a moment, she suddenly recalled something.

“Right, I need to hurry and prepare a potion!”

“What potion?” Leon asked instinctively.

Rena hesitated slightly before replying, “It’s—— the one used for contraception.”

This world had not yet invented universally applicable contraceptive medicine, but among Mana-based Magical Potions, there were formulas capable of achieving such an effect.

Most Witches and even some apothecaries within the Underworld had mastered them.

They were said to be quite reliable, with low side effects, though expensive to produce.

Even so, demand in the market remained high.

It was one of the flagship products in the Magical Potion trade.

After Leon inherited Potter’s market, he had sold this type of product as well.

Among the Witch materials Rena had inherited from her grandmother were many Magical Potion formulas, and this was one of them.

Leon froze for a moment upon hearing this, still pondering what to say when Rena sensed it.

With a complicated expression, she spoke first.

“Leon, for now, we can’t——”

Hearing this left a bitter taste in Leon’s heart, but he knew Rena was right.

There was no doubt that he and Rena truly loved each other.

What had happened in the Hidden Chamber, though triggered by circumstance and coincidence that pierced the final veil between them, was something they had both long understood would come eventually.

And once they reached this step, marriage naturally came to mind—along with children and a lifetime together.

Leon was twenty-one this year; Rena was seventeen.

In the Empire, they were both of marriageable age.

But their current situation did not allow it.

They were engaged in dangerous undertakings, and far from withdrawing, they were sinking ever deeper into them.

In such circumstances, if they had a child, could they truly provide that child with a decent future?

At present, let alone having children—even marriage required careful consideration.

Sally was still detained in the Inquisition.

Melissa was still studying in the Reformatory.

Though their case had supposedly been closed, if the two of them—who were ostensibly unrelated on the surface—were to publicly marry, it would surely arouse suspicion if discovered.

Rena had once offered him such a choice: to leave everything behind and flee together, to depend solely on one another from then on.

If they had chosen that future back then, they truly could have married, had children, and remained together for life.

But Leon had personally severed that option, choosing instead this perilous path of staking everything to seize power and wealth in order to save everyone.

And Rena had chosen to accompany him down that road.

Reexamining his choice now, Leon understood even more clearly that the happiness once possible for ordinary people seemed very far away from them now.

Yet it was not entirely impossible to reclaim it someday.

“Once we get through this hurdle, there will always be a way in the future,” Leon said softly.

Even in this line of work, it was not impossible to wash one’s hands of it and retreat unscathed.

Since they had already made their choice, there was no turning back.

That past choice had seemed beautiful, but in truth, it would have meant carrying the guilt of sacrificing Sally together, waiting for time to dull it.

They had decided to save everyone together.

There could be no retreat.

“Mm.” Rena understood Leon’s thoughts and responded softly.

“What materials does the formula require? Are we missing anything here?” Leon adjusted his mindset and asked her.

“It’s fine. We should have everything here.” As she spoke, Rena frowned slightly.

“Compared to that, ever since we came out, I’ve felt like something isn’t right.”

“You’re still feeling unwell?” Leon asked with concern.

“Not my body—my magic,” Rena replied.

“Ever since we came out, my Mana has been surging nonstop. It won’t calm down at all.”

“You too?” Leon asked, surprised.

“You too?” Rena looked back at him in astonishment.

Once someone received a Witch’s Blessing, the recipient could begin sensing the existence of Mana within their body and control it to a certain extent.

It felt like a hidden energy latent within one’s consciousness—once set into motion, it flowed through the body like a warm current.

Controlling Magical Beasts or activating a Blessing ability both required circulating Mana.

Most of the time, Mana remained in a dormant state.

But now, both Leon and Rena felt the Mana within them surging on its own, as though it had developed its own will and grown restless.

At first, they had assumed it was because they had only just tasted forbidden fruit and their bodies and minds had yet to settle.

But from the moment they left the chamber until now, the condition had not eased—on the contrary, it seemed to be intensifying.

They exchanged glances and both sensed that something about this state was unnatural.

Leon noticed the Moilai Altar not far away and the pillar of light surging up from its center.

He shifted his attention toward his perception of the Labyrinth, and the situation within the temple immediately surfaced in his mind.

He now realized he could clearly sense what was happening inside the Hidden Chamber, and the distribution of Mana throughout the entire temple had become far clearer.

Originally, the Labyrinth’s Mana had originated from the pillar of light rising from the Vertical Shaft Altar, then circulated around the altar in a specific pattern within the temple before slowly diffusing outward.

But now, the distribution of Mana had changed.

Simply put, the Mana surging from the pillar of light was continuously converging toward two locations—him and Rena.

The Labyrinth’s Mana was injecting itself into their bodies on its own.

No wonder the Mana within them had begun surging autonomously.

“What’s going on?” Leon’s breathing grew rapid.

As the rush of Mana within him intensified, he felt his body growing feverish.

This sensation of Mana surging was not unpleasant—in fact, it felt rather good.

His entire body felt as though it had been injected with a stimulant.

Could this be related to the ritual they had completed inside the Hidden Chamber?

At that thought, a tingling sensation suddenly sprouted from his bones and spread into his muscles.

His body began trembling involuntarily.

His joints crackled loudly.

To his astonishment, he felt his line of sight rising by nearly twenty centimeters.

Looking down instinctively, he realized it was not the ground that had risen—his body had grown taller.

At the same time, he heard Rena’s startled cry.

“Leon!?”

Under Rena’s astonished gaze, Leon’s body began growing at a visible rate.

His bones lengthened, his muscles swelled into extraordinary strength, nearly tearing through his clothes.

His head elongated and reshaped.

Soft gray-blue and white fur sprouted from his skin all over his body.

His teeth lengthened and sharpened, transforming his face into one resembling a gray wolf.

While staring in shock at Leon, Rena also felt her own body undergoing a kind of rebirth—though not as violently as his.

“What am I———” Leon began, only to find his voice had become unusually rough.

He looked at his hands.

His palms had grown thick and large, the backs and fingers covered in gray-blue fur.

His nails had turned into sharp claws, which he found he could retract at will.

He touched his face and confirmed that his body had taken on a beast-like appearance.

“This is——— a werewolf!” Rena exclaimed as she examined him.

“Leon, you’ve turned into a werewolf!”

A werewolf—one of the common forms of magical transformation.

It was said that once a Witch reached a certain stage of growth, she could gain the ability to transform her body into a Magical Beast form, becoming a demonized humanoid with beastly traits.

The most common were beastkin such as werewolves, as well as blood kin, serpent maidens, mermaids, harpies, and so on.

Legends even spoke of powerful Witches capable of transforming into dragonkin—half Magical Beast, half enchantingly beautiful woman.

Such images frequently appeared in folklore.

Some rare Magical Potions were said to allow ordinary people to temporarily transform into Magical Beasts, though Rena had never seen one.

But Leon had clearly undergone Magical Beast transformation on his own.

And according to the materials she had studied, this was a power only some Great Witches who had achieved a leap in growth could possess!

And now Leon had suddenly awakened such power?

No—not suddenly.

It was clearly related to the ritual just now!

Leon finally managed to steady himself slightly from the shock of his bodily transformation and turned his gaze toward Rena.

“Rena———”

He stopped mid-sentence, once again falling into stunned silence.

“What’s wrong?” Rena sensed something was off in his reaction.

“Rena, your appearance too——” Leon raised a thick finger and pointed at her.

“Your head—and your back!”

Though not as exaggerated as Leon’s change, Rena’s figure had also grown.

She had become taller, more exquisitely proportioned, her skin smoother, even her facial features subtly refined.

Both her eyes had turned a bewitching deep violet.

But the greatest changes were the pair of horns that had grown from her head—identical to those of demons in artwork—and the bat-like wings that had torn through her clothes from her back.

Shifting her attention behind her, Rena was startled to feel something extending from her tailbone, emerging beneath the hem of her skirt—a tail, which she could move at will.

“What is this?” Rena screamed.

Leon had seen such a creature in certain works before and immediately answered, “A succubus.”

Rena had also taken on a Magical Beast form.

And her form was—— a succubus.

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 107 : Succubus’s Kiss - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 107 : Succubus’s Kiss

Chapter 107: Succubus’s Kiss

Gradually recovering from their initial shock, Leon and Rena began examining the changes that had appeared on their bodies together.

There was no doubt that this was a kind of Magical Beast Transformation ability normally possessed only by relatively high-level Great Witches.

After the two of them had jointly carried out the Dual-Cultivation Ritual dedicated to Moilai inside the Hidden Chamber, the labyrinth’s magic power had poured into their bodies, strengthening the power of their blessings.

Being able to enhance blessing power after just a single ritual made the conditions for this kind of upgrade seem a little too simple.

Leon was not sure whether this was because they had already fulfilled some hidden prerequisite in advance, or whether it had something to do with his status as the Lord of the Labyrinth.

Leon tried extending his hand toward a nearby workbench, casually picked up a large tool hammer to weigh it in his hand, then simply grabbed the edge of the workbench with one hand and lifted the entire table up.

Just as recorded in Church materials, once entering a beastified demonized humanoid form, physical strength would be significantly enhanced, far surpassing that of ordinary people.

Beastification was a relatively common demonized humanoid form.

It was even said that there were special beastification magical potions capable of achieving similar effects, so the Church possessed a fairly large amount of documentation on the subject.

However, when consuming magical potions, loss of control was said to occur frequently—especially when encountering certain triggers, such as the night of the full moon.

At such times, Moilai's magic power would become more active, and those who had consumed beastification potions would be completely dominated by bestial instincts, becoming unable to think clearly and attacking everyone around them indiscriminately.

According to Church records, witches' beastified forms were somewhat more controllable and would not easily spiral out of control.

Witches who possessed beastification abilities could adjust the degree of beastification at will; once proficient, they could shift freely from humanoid form to a fully bestial form.

Werewolves were said to be among the physically toughest types of beastified forms, with extremely strong self-healing abilities, even earning them a reputation for near-immortality.

Leon used the claws of his right hand to tear into the back of his left hand, easily ripping open several gashes as blood immediately flowed out.

He had intended to observe the healing speed of his wounds, but once the blood flowed out, he suddenly noticed something strange.

The blood flowed from the back of his hand to the edge, yet never dripped down, as if it were adhering to his skin.

Leon turned his hand over.

The blood still did not fall.

He dipped another finger into it and rubbed it lightly.

The texture of the blood had not changed much—it was still a pure liquid and did not exhibit any obvious stickiness.

When he focused his attention, he discovered that the magic power within the blood seemed far more active than before.

Moreover, he vaguely sensed that this spilled blood seemed capable of responding to his will.

“Flow down,” he tried directing his thoughts.

This time, the blood finally dripped from the back of his hand, gathering into a small pool on the ground.

However, it did not seep into the earth, instead behaving like mercury.

“Move,” Leon continued to channel his will.

The pool of blood on the ground suddenly elongated and began flowing across the surface on its own, like a small serpent wriggling forward.

After a moment’s thought, Leon also activated his Cursed Blood ability.

The blood crawling along the ground instantly turned purplish-red, then, under the infusion of Leon’s will, transformed into a cloud of smoke that rose upward.

Unlike before, it did not disperse, but instead slowly hovered in the air.

Leon tried controlling it and found that this poisonous gas could also drift around at his command, like a ghost—only much slower than the movement of liquid blood.

With another shift of his thoughts, the toxic mist dispersed.

At the same time, Leon noticed that the blood still clinging to the back of his hand had not changed when he activated his ability.

His control over Cursed Blood had become far more precise than before.

Not only could he make blood flow as if it were part of his own body, he could also accurately control only a very small portion of it.

This meant that even if he fed his blood to multiple targets, he could choose to trigger the poison in only one of them.

After a short while, the wounds on the back of his hand stopped bleeding.

Leon wiped away the blood and parted the fur, discovering that the wounds had already begun to close on their own, with new skin visibly forming.

A werewolf's vitality truly lived up to its reputation.

He continued circulating mana and conducted several more tests, discovering that when mana flowed into his claws, they would turn purple and emit the same intimidating aura as his Cursed Blood.

It seemed that in this state, even without deliberately using blood as a medium, he could apply curses to others directly through his claws.

"My demonized humanoid form is a werewolf. Could it be related to the magical potion I used before?" Leon speculated.

After Weiss had given him that formula, Leon had continuously used the antidote Rena brewed from it, with excellent results.

The scar had now faded considerably and had essentially stopped recurring.

And the main ingredient of that magical potion was demonic wolf blood.

"That can at least be explained. But what about mine?"

Rena's voice made Leon turn his head.

While Leon had been testing his abilities, Rena had also been studying the changes in her own body.

She had even tried spreading her wings and flying a little.

When circulating mana, she could indeed lift off with the help of a jump, but neither her takeoff nor flight speed could be considered fast.

Although Leon had expressed envy at Rena's ability to fly in her demonized humanoid form, Rena herself was clearly more at a loss than he was.

“Why did I have to turn into a succubus?” After testing her flight, she was still touching her horns and wings, muttering to herself.

Turning into a succubus—a magical beast form that existed in legends as one that seduced people into depravity—always felt somewhat undignified.

Fortunately, she was not wearing the red cloak left behind by her grandmother.

Otherwise, it surely would have torn apart just like her current clothes when she transformed.

Succubi were extremely rare demonized humanoid forms.

Even in the archives preserved by the Inquisition, there were very few records of witches capable of transforming into succubi.

“You smell really nice,” Leon suddenly sniffed the air.

His sense of smell was now far keener than before his transformation, allowing him to detect many scents he normally could not.

He could sense a faintly sweet fragrance emanating from Rena—something that would likely be imperceptible to an ordinary person.

Leon found that the more he inhaled this scent, the more radiant and alluring Rena appeared before his eyes.

The fragrance seemed to possess a mild hypnotic effect.

At present, a large portion of the back of Rena’s long dress had been torn open, exposing her fair back.

Her succubus-transformed body was bewitching and captivating, radiating a charm completely different from her usual demeanor, making his heart itch uncontrollably.

This was a genuine succubus!

Just seeing Rena like this made Leon suddenly feel that transmigrating into this world and living this life had truly been worth it!

“Don’t keep staring like that. The way you’re looking at me right now is really scary!” Rena felt a bit prickly under Leon’s fixed gaze.

“Sorry. I really do like how you look right now,” Leon grinned, revealing a mouthful of sharp fangs.

“Like it is fine, but don’t look like you’re about to eat me,” Rena muttered a complaint.

“In another sense, I really kind of want to—” Leon blurted out unconsciously.

“What do you mean?” Rena did not immediately understand.

“Rena, there’s still a lot about your abilities that’s worth researching. I think we should do more experiments,” Leon suddenly suggested.

“Have you heard that succubi can control others through intimate contact? I think we could try it.”

“How would we try?” Rena vaguely sensed something and frowned slightly.

“For example, we could do it one more time—” Leon pointed toward the deeper Hidden Chamber, speaking in a heavily suggestive tone.

Rena widened her eyes.

“Don’t mess around. Didn’t we just do it? And it was already three times—you couldn’t possibly do it again even if you wanted to!”

“But I feel like I can again,” Leon said with blazing eyes.

Whether it was because his physical abilities had been enhanced by werewolf transformation, or because of the aura emitted by Rena after becoming a succubus, Leon felt that his condition had recovered once more.

“But I can’t!” Rena refused decisively in a fluster.

“I don’t want to—absolutely not!”

“Alright, then we’ll talk about it tonight when we get back,” Leon nodded, looking as though it was already settled.

“I didn’t agree!” Rena immediately emphasized.

“Then how about trying a kiss? I heard that a succubus’s kiss also has an alluring effect,” Leon proposed.

“You have to figure out what kind of changes have happened to you.”

“This—well, that should be okay,” Rena reluctantly accepted this time.

“Wait a moment. I’ll change back first,” Leon said as he tried to control his body to return to normal.

Rena looked up and examined Leon as he was now, then suddenly blurted out, "It's fine like this too, right?"

Leon froze.

"Didn't you say I looked scary like this?"

"I meant the way you were looking at me was scary. As for how you look now—" Rena stared at Leon and said shyly, "it's actually kind of okay."

Leon's eyes were now yellow-brown like a wolf's, and his pupils were completely different from a human's.

When his gaze sharpened, it gave off a wild, feral impression.

Rena did not dislike Leon in this form.

On the contrary, she found it novel and even sensed an unusual kind of handsomeness.

It was only when he stared at her intensely, with undisguised desire in his eyes, as if he might devour her at any moment, that she could not help but feel a bit uneasy.

"Alright then, let's try it like this."

Since Rena said she did not mind, Leon simply did not change back.

After speaking, he bent down and lowered his head.

In his current form, there was quite a height difference between him and Rena.

Rena also stood on her tiptoes, cooperatively cupping Leon's beastified face, then kissed the tip of Leon's long mouth, while instinctively circulating her mana.

In an instant, Leon's entire body jolted, as if struck by electricity.

A tingling stimulation spread from where Rena kissed him, coursing throughout his body and transforming into an intense pleasure that shot straight to his brain, leaving him dizzy.

At the same time, he clearly felt his body beginning to grow cold, while Rena sensed a warm current gathering within herself—Leon's vitality was being converted into her mana.

Leon realized this, yet did not want to pull away.

After kissing Rena, his head felt light and fuzzy.

That powerful pleasure clenched him tightly, while a gentle drowsiness wrapped around his consciousness, making him feel extremely at ease.

However, once Rena noticed that she was draining Leon's vitality, she stopped out of concern.

When she pulled back, she found Leon gazing at her with unfocused eyes.

This meant—had she successfully hypnotized him?

“Leon?” Rena tried patting Leon's face.

At that moment, Leon woke with a jolt after struggling within his consciousness.

During the kiss, he had indeed been affected by Rena's charm, but he felt that he could break free.

Perhaps the kiss had been too brief, or perhaps in his werewolf state he possessed stronger resistance to this kind of allure.

When he came back to his senses, he found Rena curiously studying him, even waving a hand in front of his eyes, seemingly unsure of his current state.

“——” After a moment of thought, Leon chose to let his expression return to a dazed state and remain motionless, continuing to act as though he were still hypnotized.

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 108 : A Further Step Up in Their Enterprise - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 108 : A Further Step Up in Their Enterprise

Chapter 108: A Further Step Up in Their Enterprise

“Leon? Leon!” Rena called out several times in front of Leon and even tried shaking him.

Leon remained completely still, putting on a vacant, hollow-eyed expression.

Just a moment ago, a mischievous thought had surged through his mind, making him want to see what Rena would do if he pretended to be hypnotized.

“Is he really hypnotized?”

Rena studied Leon in confusion.

Right after the kiss, she had felt something similar to the synchronization of Mana after using a Blood Pact.

But it had only lasted for a brief moment.

That sensation had already disappeared, yet Leon still looked as though he were under her hypnosis.

Could it be that the principle behind charm worked differently?

In that case, did she not need to deliberately stop circulating Mana, and could simply issue a command to dispel the hypnosis?

Rena was a little uncertain.

Legend had it that a Succubus could cast a short-lived charm on someone.

The charmed person would obey the Succubus completely, and all memories during the period of charm would be entirely forgotten.

In other words, at this moment, Leon would obey her every word?

“Leon, shake hands.” Rena tentatively extended her hand.

“Yes.” Leon responded in a flat, emotionless tone and took Rena’s hand.

Realizing that the command truly worked, Rena began sizing Leon up with growing interest and then gave another order, “Give me a princess carry.”

“Yes.” Leon reached out and lifted Rena horizontally into his arms.

For him in his current state, the motion was effortless.

Nestled in Leon’s embrace, Rena felt as though she were curled up in a warm cradle.

Curiously, she reached out to stroke the white fur around Leon’s neck.

The fur that had grown after his transformation was incredibly smooth and soft, wonderfully pleasant to the touch.

Being stroked gave Leon a faint tingling sensation.

It was unexpectedly comfortable.

He did not know whether his senses had changed after transforming, or whether it was influenced by the aura Rena was giving off.

“Let me sit on your shoulders,” Rena added.

“Yes.” Like lifting a child, Leon raised Rena high and let her sit astride his shoulders.

The height made Rena instinctively wrap her arms tightly around Leon’s head.

Then she laughed happily and began repeatedly stroking his head.

“Such a good boy!”

Watching the Werewolf Leon behave like a large doll under her control felt incredibly wondrous to her.

Gently stroking the top of Leon’s head, Rena suddenly asked in a soft voice, “Leon, answer me seriously. Do you truly like me, or are you just responding to my feelings because I like you?”

Leon was momentarily startled.

Thinking about it carefully, he realized that he had never truly expressed his own feelings to Rena.

No wonder she lacked a sense of security.

He gathered his thoughts and replied, “Before I met you, I lived in a muddled haze. Only after meeting you and going through so much this past year did I feel like I had truly lived once. When I was at my most helpless, you were always by my side. Of course I like you, Rena.”

Hypnotized or not, these were his true feelings.

He spoke without the slightest hesitation.

Rena was overjoyed upon hearing this.

She happily ruffled Leon’s head in a frenzy.

After quite a while, she said, “Put me down.”

Leon carefully lowered Rena.

Once on the ground, she still looked at him with a bright smile, then stepped forward and hugged him, rubbing her face against his chest.

Like a little child.

Leon smiled helplessly in his heart.

He had wanted to see whether Rena would do something strange, yet their interaction had turned out—unexpectedly pure.

Sure enough, even after taking on the appearance of a Succubus, Rena was still the innocent and romantic girl he knew.

That was not bad at all.

“Alright, you can wake up now.” Rena clapped her hands experimentally.

Leon put on a dazed expression, blinking repeatedly at Rena as though just waking from a dream.

He looked utterly confused.

“What just happened? Was I hypnotized? What did you do to me?”

Seeing his reaction, Rena revealed a mysterious smile.

“You guess.”

“Did you do something strange to me?” Leon patted himself down and even tugged at his trousers.

“You didn’t peek, did you?”

“How could I!” Rena lightly smacked Leon in annoyance.

After doing so, she stole a quick glance anyway.

“So what exactly did you do?” Leon asked, holding back a laugh.

“Nothing. I just touched the fur on your neck,” Rena replied, looking away.

“That’s really all?” Leon confirmed.

“That’s all this time. Next time might be different.” Rena grinned smugly.

It seemed Rena truly believed the ability had worked on him.

Perhaps if he acted a few more times in the future, he could guide her into doing something more unrestrained.

Leon mused to himself.

At that moment, both of them began to feel the Mana within their bodies gradually settling down.

“It seems this transformation has a time limit.”

Sensing it, Leon simply allowed the Mana to recede like an ebbing tide.

His body quickly returned to normal, and Rena also reverted to her original appearance.

“We’ll experiment with this ability more carefully later. Don’t let anyone else know. For now, let’s seal that Hidden Chamber and avoid approaching it again,” Leon said.

No matter what, it was a good thing that the power of the Blessing had been enhanced.

This ability might become one of their trump cards in the future.

“What about the Doppelganger inside?” Rena asked.

The Doppelganger had been struck by Leon’s curse and was still in a state of Petrification.

“After I lift the curse, see if you can control it and have it come out on its own.

I want to carve out a concealed area in the Labyrinth to keep it for observation,” Leon said after some consideration.

A Doppelganger capable of transforming into various people or Magical Beasts could prove useful in many situations if properly controlled.

After going through some twists and turns to finish exploring the Labyrinth, they now had to think about the work ahead.

“Leon, if we’re going to move those Magical Beasts here to raise them, does that mean we’ll have to live on this island?” Rena asked.

“There are some houses and a well outside the mine. After some renovation, living there shouldn’t be a problem. It just depends on whether you mind,” Leon replied.

“I don’t really mind. But can you handle everything, Leon?” Rena said.

The quota given by the Earl was several times the output they had previously produced from the Labyrinth in Hamel Town.

To meet that target, Rena would need to spend far more energy than before controlling Magical Beasts and refining Mana.

She would also have to prepare and sell Magical Potions, while setting aside time to research medicine for Saltification Disease.

The breeding and slaughtering of Magical Beasts in the Workshop, as well as processing their materials afterward, would be beyond her capacity.

Leon would have to handle those tasks.

In addition, they would need to consider the storage and transportation of Magical Beast materials and Magical Potions, shipping them from Arend Island through the docks to various places in South Harbor County.

This area would also require long-term supervision to prevent outsiders from entering the Labyrinth again.

At the same time, they would need to monitor the Labyrinth for the unexpected emergence of new Magical Beasts—

Clearly, Leon could not manage all of this alone.

On the surface, he was still serving in the Inquisition.

Traveling back and forth between Hamel Town and Arend Island would consume a great deal of time.

Now that they possessed an entire Labyrinth, the scale of production was no longer comparable to the days when they quietly ran a small Workshop hidden within the Labyrinth of Hamel Town.

They were now operating a factory, with many vacant positions requiring additional manpower.

Once more people were involved, logistical supply issues would also arise.

Moreover, those assisting inside the Labyrinth would be exposed to their core production operations, meaning they had to ensure these people were trustworthy.

At this level of consideration, Leon clearly realized that their enterprise was now entirely different from when they had quietly tucked themselves away in the Labyrinth of Hamel Town running that small Workshop.

There were still mountains of issues to handle, but fortunately they were mostly trivial matters.

Leon believed he could manage them.

“I’ll solve these issues. But before that—” Leon looked around the temple and nodded lightly.

His gaze then settled on Rena.

“We should find something decent to change into first.”

The two exchanged helpless smiles.

After their transformations reverted, both Leon’s and Rena’s clothes had been torn to shreds.

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 109 : Selecting Subordinates - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 109 : Selecting Subordinates

Chapter 109: Selecting Subordinates

After a period of time, inside a dilapidated house at the abandoned pier of Arend Island, separated by an iron table, Leon swept his gaze across the fifteen men lined up before him.

Father Auden stood at his left, while the masked Rena stood behind him.

On the production side, Leon had already transferred all the Magical Beasts he had been raising from the now exhausted Hamel Town Labyrinth to the newly cleansed Arend Island Labyrinth.

The Magical Beasts were in excellent condition within the new Labyrinth.

Rena had already confirmed that they had begun generating fresh Mana.

The Arend Island Labyrinth was undoubtedly sufficient to serve as the production base supporting their business.

However, to properly operate this Labyrinth, they needed to station new personnel on this side of the island.

In terms of numbers alone, Leon had quite a few people at his disposal.

On the sales front, through the list provided by Father Auden, he had essentially taken over part of the South Harbor County market that originally belonged to Mr.

Griffin Henry Potter.

The Magical Potions currently ordered by those noble and wealthy clients were now basically produced by him and Rena.

The replenished funds were already enough to cover their operating expenses, even leaving them with a considerable profit.

In the process of expanding the business, Leon had also instructed Father Auden to recruit more manpower to handle transportation, errands, and liaison work.

Most were former subordinates of Potter, along with that group of mercenaries who served as enforcers and guards.

The total number had already exceeded fifty.

During this period, he had conducted a simple assessment of their capabilities.

After discussing with Father Auden, he first selected fifteen among them and summoned them to Arend Island for a final round of screening.

Most of the dozen or so present had participated in the Labyrinth-cleansing mission.

They knew that Leon had invested significant resources to secure the Labyrinth, but most of them did not yet know his true purpose in taking it, nor did they fully understand the industry of raising Magical Beasts within the Labyrinth to produce Mana.

Once they were chosen to participate in the core production operations, they would inevitably come into contact with these secrets.

“You fifteen here were carefully selected by me from recent operations. I plan to assign you to work on this island. You won’t be required to live here permanently; shifts can be arranged. As for compensation, the starting pay will be double your current earnings.”

Leon’s opening statement immediately brought excited expressions to the faces of those present.

He raised a hand to signal them to calm down.

“There are many positions to be arranged here, but broadly speaking, they fall into two categories: inside the Labyrinth and outside the Labyrinth. You all should know that I spent quite a bit of resources to secure this Labyrinth. It is extremely important to our business.”

Some of the men instinctively nodded, their gazes toward Leon tinged with awe.

They knew the process by which Mr. Fenrir had taken the Labyrinth.

During the first cleansing attempt, Mr. Fenrir had dealt with that pack of Demonic Wolves without losing a single man.

Later, because of the appearance of that Drake, a young scout sent ahead had died, and the mission had failed.

Yet Mr. Fenrir had still paid their wages and had even honored the contract by providing compensation.

Just when they had assumed Fenrir would surely abandon the Labyrinth due to being unable to handle the Drake, only two days later they saw him return to the island with a few others, entering the Labyrinth once again.

After several terrifying dragon roars echoed from within, while they were still uncertain whether Fenrir and the others were alive or dead, Mr.

Fenrir walked out calmly and beckoned them to go inside to assist.

When they entered, the Drake they had believed impossible to kill was already completely dead, its corpse cut into numerous pieces and transported out of the Labyrinth.

“The positions inside the Labyrinth are the most core part. Simply put, we will be raising Magical Beasts in there. Many of you should have experience in this area.” Leon paused.

“In terms of base compensation, it will be five times that of your previous standard contract. Bonuses for unexpected situations and additional tasks will be calculated separately.”

A collective gasp rippled through the group.

Five times the pay meant over twenty thousand Fenni per month.

That meant even a stable monthly income alone would exceed what they earned from those life-risking ventures.

Being in the Underworld did not mean that taking risks automatically led to wealth.

Most of them simply had no other respectable livelihood.

Some had even served prison terms and bore criminal records, leaving them little chance of legitimate employment locally.

Long-term employment as bodyguards or enforcers did not pay much more than regular guards.

Twenty thousand Fenni a month—most officers in the Empire probably did not receive such treatment!

“At present, five positions are open. The work itself isn’t complicated, but it involves contact with many things that cannot be spoken of. I will only choose those I absolutely trust. In the future, the cadres responsible for various districts will also be selected primarily from this group.”

Leon’s gaze swept across them.

Every pair of eyes burned with eagerness, all conveying the same unspoken plea:

“Pick me!”

Without expression, Leon took out five small glass bottles filled with dark-red liquid and placed them on the table.

Under the confused stares of the crowd, he explained calmly, “These bottles contain a special Magical Potion. Simply drinking it will cause no issues. But if triggered by a Witch’s power—”

Leon signaled to Rena behind him.

She stepped forward, picked up one of the bottles.

The blood within instantly turned purplish-red, emitting an aura that evoked instinctive physiological fear.

The enforcers present showed visible apprehension.

They had seen Mr. Fenrir use this terrifying Magical Potion before—capable of petrifying both men and Demonic Wolves on the spot.

And this Magical Potion appeared to have come from this mysterious Witch cooperating with Mr. Fenrir.

Those with sharper minds quickly understood why Fenrir had produced these potions.

Their expressions changed at once.

“The selection criteria are simple. Whoever drinks these potions first will obtain the core positions,” Leon said flatly.

Silence fell over the room.

Leon had anticipated this reaction.

He offered no further persuasion and simply waited.

After his Blessing had grown stronger, he had further experimented with his Cursed Blood and discovered some interesting changes.

Previously, when his Cursed Blood was fed to a living being, it would gradually lose effect after about two days.

But now, after feeding it to a target, he could continuously sense Mana fluctuations resonating with himself from that individual.

The sensing range could be quite far, meaning he could to a certain extent mark and locate those who had consumed the Poisonous Blood.

Even after many days had passed, as long as the target remained within the range in which he could manipulate Mana, he could trigger the poison at will.

Leon suspected that his Cursed Blood had evolved into a special kind of organism—one that could respond to his will and parasitize a target’s body long-term.

Through experimentation, he had confirmed that long-term control over others via Cursed Blood to prevent betrayal was now possible.

With the Labyrinth about to enter formal operation, he had no time for prolonged evaluation of recruits.

Thus, he chose this method to select five individuals for the core operations.

Those willing to drink the Cursed Blood were effectively placing their lives temporarily in his hands, greatly reducing the likelihood of betrayal.

After discussing with Rena, they decided to let everyone believe that the potion and its activation ability were in Rena’s hands as a Witch.

This added credibility and also allowed her to directly command personnel in core Labyrinth positions.

Now, the men’s awe toward Rena was no less than their awe toward Leon—perhaps even tinged with greater fear.

This Witch could not only kill with poison effortlessly but also control those dangerous Demonic Wolves.

When Leon stated the condition, all of them hesitated.

For quite some time, no one stepped forward.

Most of them dared to exchange gunfire, but drinking this dreadful Magical Potion was equivalent to working with a gun permanently pressed to their heads—an entirely different matter.

Father Auden leaned close and whispered, “It seems this method may not recruit anyone.”

Leon did not respond.

If no one volunteered, he would not lower the conditions.

At such a critical time, the Labyrinth’s initial operations could not risk betrayal.

At that moment, Simon, standing within the crowd, suddenly took a deep breath and stepped forward decisively.

“I’ll do it!”

The others looked at him in astonishment.

Ignoring their gazes, Simon picked up a bottle and said solemnly to Leon and Rena, “This life of mine was saved by Mr. Fenrir and Miss. Mr. Fenrir has always treated us well and kept his word. I’m willing to follow you!”

Scars remained on his wrist, face, and neck from the Drake’s Acid Mist.

During that desperate escape in the Labyrinth, he had nearly been devoured.

Leon’s Magical Potion had briefly hindered the Drake, and Rena had ordered the Demonic Wolves to drag his barely conscious body out.

The life-saving grace made him willing to trust the man and the Witch before him.

Moreover, he had keenly sensed that Mr. Fenrir was about to take over South Harbor County’s market and territory, with further expansion to come.

Showing loyalty early meant greater opportunity to rise.

Leon smiled faintly.

“Don’t treat it like a toast. Hurry and drink.”

Simon laughed awkwardly, then closed his eyes and downed the potion in one gulp.

The taste was not as strange as he had imagined—only thick with a metallic tang of blood.

After drinking, he nodded solemnly at Leon and was about to step back when Leon said, “Wait.”

Simon looked surprised.

“You used to be a Magical Beast Hunter. You have experience raising Magical Beasts, don’t you?”

Simon nodded.

“Good.” Leon gestured three fingers toward Father Auden.

Father Auden silently produced a Gold Voucher worth thirty thousand and handed it to Simon.

“An advance of one month’s base pay. I appoint you as supervisor. The others will follow your direction. You’ll be responsible for raising the Magical Beasts and conducting security patrols within the Labyrinth,” Leon said, locking eyes with him.

“Do well. In six months, your salary will increase by fifty percent.”

Simon’s leadership role was crucial.

Leon had to offer sufficient incentive.

Holding the Gold Voucher, Simon’s face lit up with joy.

“Mr. Fenrir, I won’t disappoint you!!”

He glanced back at the crowd—several of his own men were among them.

If they were willing to join him, that would be ideal.

Two of his subordinates, already tempted, saw his signal and decisively stepped forward to take bottles.

Encouraged by them, the remaining onlookers grew restless.

Several stepped forward tentatively, and upon realizing the fierce competition, rushed ahead.

Two men seized the remaining bottles.

Just as others prepared to snatch them away, Leon said coldly, “That’s enough. Whoever grabbed them first keeps them. No fighting.”

Those who had secured bottles smiled in relief.

The others retreated in frustration.

Even the same thing, once eagerly sought after, instantly increased in perceived value.

“No need to be discouraged. You can still obtain positions on this island. There will be many opportunities later,” Leon said, sweeping his gaze across them.

“Now that this is settled, let’s begin work as soon as possible.”

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 110 : It Was Time to Start Money Laundering - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 110 : It Was Time to Start Money Laundering

Chapter 110: It Was Time to Start Money Laundering

In the depths of the Labyrinth, across the vast open ground that had once belonged to the Demonic Wolf habitat, Leon directed Simon and the others to set up simple fences, separating Head-Hunting Rabbits, Slimes, Giant Scorpions, and other Magical Beasts into different zones.

The large pit once used by the Demonic Wolves to pile up prey corpses was filled in with transported soil, after which Mandrake Grass and Living Vines—plant-type Magical Beasts of the Labyrinth—were transplanted there.

A wide area had several beast cages arranged, prepared for the Demonic Wolves.

At this time, half of the Demonic Wolves were roaming outside.

When Rena was within the Labyrinth, these wolves could still be controlled and serve as guards inside.

Outside the Labyrinth, the remaining manpower repaired the ruined houses, set up sentry posts, and prepared stables.

In the future, a large quantity of Magical Beast materials would be transported from this Labyrinth to that pier.

The temple that had once enshrined Moilai had been converted into Rena's laboratory.

All work related to Mana extraction and Magical Potion preparation was carried out there.

Materials were processed outside before being delivered inside for her use.

After arranging work inside and out, Leon entered the temple.

Rena was examining the purity of a batch of Mana.

"How is it?" Leon asked Rena.

"The Mana purity has undoubtedly improved," Rena replied.

"This time, the highest purity reached eighty-eight percent."

As the power of their Blessing grew, the two of them had not only gained the ability of Magical Beast Transformation, but the purity of the Mana they refined had also increased somewhat.

Previously, when Rena extracted Mana from First-Level Magical Beasts that had eaten humans, the purity hovered around seventy-eight percent.

Now it could steadily exceed eighty percent.

As for those Magical Beasts that had consumed the corpse of a Blessing Recipient, their purity had originally ranged between eighty-two and eighty-five percent.

Now the highest purity had reached eighty-eight percent.

"It seems we won't need to worry about meeting the demand for that high-end batch anymore," Leon said.

Out of the two hundred grams of Mana required by the Earl, fifty grams had to reach over eighty percent purity.

Originally, they could only achieve that grade by relying on Magical Beasts that had consumed the corpse of a Blessing Recipient—and even then, only after sufficient intake.

The only corpse they had on hand was the one initially provided by the Earl.

Reaching the required quantity had been somewhat difficult, but now there was no longer any need to worry.

Any Magical Beast that had eaten humans could now yield Mana refined by Rena to over eighty percent.

Moreover, they now had Demonic Wolves and newly hatched Petrifying Lizards—Third-Level Magical Beasts—not to mention an entire Drake from which Mana could be extracted.

The higher the Magical Beast's level, the more room there was for improvement in Mana purity.

“But Leon, there's a problem now. The Drake we refined before had eaten humans as well, and it was a Fourth-Level Magical Beast. Logically speaking, the Mana extracted should have been far superior to that of First-Level Magical Beasts. Yet the purity I extracted was only eighty-eight to nearly ninety percent—barely different from those First-Level Magical Beasts that consumed a Blessing Recipient's corpse.”

Rena looked at Leon.

“And the portion you tried refining—you still lag five percentage points behind me when refining ordinary Magical Beasts. However, whether it's the Drake or the Slime that consumed that Blessing corpse, the Mana you extracted was also above eighty-six percent, already close to mine.”

“You mean?” Leon sensed her implication.

“I mean that once we reach eighty-eight to ninety percent purity, we seem to have hit a bottleneck. Even if we let the Magical Beasts eat humans, it appears we can only raise it to this level.” Rena spoke seriously.

“Rena, this level of purity is already more than sufficient. You know that Mana above eighty percent is considered top-grade among the Earl's goods,” Leon said.

“But for us, if possible, it would be best to try raising it a little further———” Rena suddenly lowered her voice.

Leon paused, then understood.

“Has there been progress with the Special Medicine?”

“The purest batch of Mana extracted from the Drake can already almost halt the internal organ erosion caused by Saltification Disease. Theoretically, this medicine could keep Miss Sally alive.” Rena said.

Leon felt pleasantly surprised.

“So Mrs. Hesh won’t have to worry about dying from Saltification Disease?”

“No, I said theoretically.” Most late-stage Saltification Disease patients died from complications before total organ failure. The current medicine could barely prevent Miss Sally from reaching the stage where her organs failed due to Saltification Disease, but that did not mean she wouldn’t die from other complications. I feel we’re just a little short. If we could reverse the condition———” Rena said earnestly.

“If we raise Mana purity above ninety percent, would that help?” Leon asked.

“At the very least, it’s a direction worth attempting,” Rena replied.

“Alright. I’ll see if I can gather some intelligence from within the Church regarding this.” Leon thought for a moment before speaking.

“By the way, how has Miss Sally been recently?” Rena asked.

“Quite well. Her spirits are fairly good. She still occasionally runs a low fever, but I visit her often,” Leon said.

Leon frequently went to the Detention Area of the Inquisition to visit Sally, bringing her medicine, food, and clean clothing—even bedding and books—ensuring her basic quality of life inside the cell.

Bishop Beckett had fully acquiesced to his special treatment of Sally; it was part of their transaction.

He had also explained his new decision to Sally.

She had seemed worried and even told him directly not to concern himself with her life, for she had long prepared herself mentally.

But when Leon mentioned that there might be a chance in the future for her to cure her illness and even continue living with Melissa, Sally hesitated.

In the end, she accepted Leon’s arrangement.

“And what about Melissa———” Rena asked hesitantly.

“I’ve sent her some things and visited the Reformatory to ask about her condition. I even saw her from a distance. They say she studies quite diligently there and has even made friends,” Leon replied.

“You still haven’t met her?” Rena asked.

“—————” Leon fell silent for a while and shook his head.

There were still too many uncertainties regarding Sally’s situation.

He could not give Melissa too many guarantees.

Even if they met, he did not know what he would say.

Moreover, when Sally made her deal with him, she had begged him to keep his distance from Melissa.

He had always been mindful of that.

“I see—————” Rena did not press further.

“We still need a bit more time.” After speaking, Leon turned to leave.

“I’ll go inspect outside again.”

Leon inspected the situation inside the Labyrinth once more, then exited to review the progress of the construction work outside.

At that moment, Father Auden, who had been stationed outside the Labyrinth, took the initiative to speak to him.

“I noticed you’ve left some people at the pier repairing the jetty?”

“We’ll be docking cargo ships frequently in the future. We need at least a functional pier, don’t we?” Leon replied.

The pier on Arend Island had suffered severe damage and was practically unusable.

Docking there previously had involved considerable risk.

But if they were to frequently transport personnel, materials, and products back and forth, cargo ships would regularly enter and exit this pier.

Leon felt that at the very least, the jetty should be repaired.

He could afford that expense.

“Fenrir, if people come and go around the Labyrinth, you can use an Inquisition investigation warrant to brush them off. But if you plan to use that pier long-term, I suggest you reach a commercial agreement with Viscount Arend.” Father Auden proposed.

“Doesn’t Viscount Arend avoid interfering with matters related to the Labyrinth? And the merchant consortium you handled—isn’t it his major creditor? Why not have him mortgage the pier?” Leon asked.

“The Watcher Merchant Consortium has long assessed that this pier lacks sufficient collateral value. Nominal operating rights to the pier are still with Viscount Arend,” Father Auden said.

“They’re not even operating this wrecked pier. Now that someone’s paying to repair it, how could they object?” Leon asked.

“Paying requires a pretext that doesn’t arouse suspicion. Do you think the Church would pay Viscount Arend to repair the pier under the pretense of investigating this Labyrinth?” Father Auden countered.

“That makes sense.” Leon had to admit the priest was right.

If they carried out operations in the name of sealing the Labyrinth, the Church would certainly not pay to repair the pier for Viscount Arend.

On the contrary, it should demand a substantial donation from him for sealing a Labyrinth on his territory.

Renting the pier in the Church’s name while paying to repair it would indeed be suspicious.

“We need a third-party identity to use the pier—a private fleet willing to provide services for the Church, transporting materials for the Church’s Labyrinth investigations. In that case, paying to repair the jetty would be perfectly reasonable,” Father Auden said.

It was not uncommon for private individuals or commercial groups to spend money to serve public authorities.

It was merely an exchange of money and power.

“Then I’ll leave it to you. Just find some civilian fleet to sign a contract with Viscount Arend.” Leon waved him off.

“The fleet is for your use. It would be best to operate under your name. You buy the ships, and the fleet can conduct business in your name. It can also help you launder some assets along the way. If you want your money to be usable aboveboard, it’s time

you started laundering it.” Father Auden took out a prepared contract and handed it to Leon.

Leon glanced at it.

“You want me to spend four hundred thousand to purchase a cargo sailing ship and two small ferries?”

“Don’t forget my handling fee.” Father Auden raised a finger.

“You’ve used those ships before—you should know they’re worth the price. I had them appraised for you. You don’t need to worry about me cheating you. I also don’t want to wake up one day and suddenly be poisoned by you.”

“I’ve only been a Lower-Ranking Inquisitor for three years. Wouldn’t it be strange for me to own several ships?” Leon asked.

“As long as you had no prior debts, it’s fine. No one knows your exact financial situation. Through a friend’s introduction, you learned that a shipowner was selling several vessels cheaply due to debt. You used your savings from living frugally, plus a loan from a friend, to purchase them and rent them out for extra income. That’s not unusual. Which bishops or knight officials don’t have some private property? You’re an Inquisitor, so using your private assets to serve the Church and curry favor with your superiors is perfectly reasonable. I’ve already forged the loan records and all the documentation. Once you sign, these ships will be yours, and I can negotiate with Adele Lovelace about leasing the pier in your name.” Father Auden said.

“Not with Viscount Arend?” Leon asked, puzzled.

“Viscount Arend doesn’t require us to go through all this trouble. Who do you think we’re trying to fool by doing this?” Father Auden shrugged.

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